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## Technical Societies

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One of the questions confronting the young engineer is, "Shall I join an engineering society, and if so which one." Usually the state of his finances will not permit him to belong to many clubs and societies and the selection of the proper one to join first is important. Of course eventually, if he is successful he will probably become a member of a number of technical organizations.

There are three distinct classes of technical societies in this country, the local society or club, the research societies, and the National engineering societies. All of these have their place and each is doing a service which in no way interferes with the other.

The National engineering societies, such as the American Society of Civil Engineers, the American Institute of Architects, the American Institute of Electrical Engineers, etc., exist largely for the advancement and dissemination of technical information, and the maintenance of professional standards. Their publications are very carefully edited and constitute a valuable source of technical information. For those who live in New York City, and for those who are able to attend the annual conventions of these societies, they may have

some personal value. Another asset accruing to membership in a National society is the privilege of wearing the badge. This is to a certain extent, an indication that the wearer has some engineering qualifications.

The National research societies, such as the American Society for Testing Materials, the American Railway Engineering Association, etc., exist primarily to promote scientific investigation. They standardize methods of testing and specifications for materials and workmanship, and assist in coordinating and publishing engineering research.

Last but not least in importance, comes the local club or technical society. This is where the young engineer will get his personal touch with other members of the profession, and in my opinion is where his engineering society membership should start. His technical society activity should start while in college by membership and active participation in the student engineering society, and after graduation this membership should be transferred to the local society nearest to his habitat. And this membership should not be passive.

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## TECHNICAL SOCIETIES

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A man gets just as much out of a technical society as he puts into it, and if he does not attend its meetings and take part in the discussions he will not get back the worth of his dues. The meetings of the local club give one an opportunity to rub elbows with fellows and to make acquaintances which will be invaluable to the young engineer.

The purpose of the local club is to foster good fellowship, advance the personal status of the members as a whole and to discuss and investigate local public improvements of an engineering nature, both existing and proposed.

"While the great National Societies are important in setting standards and in considering broad problems, yet local affairs make up at least nine-tenths of the vital problems of the engineer's life. In each locality where there may be a dozen or more engineers so situated as to be able to meet occasionally, there should be formed, if not already existing, an engineering association embracing all professional engineers and other interested in engineering, to discuss and act upon these vital problems."

In the past, what efforts have been made to improve the status of the engineering profession and the condition of the engineer have been largely sporadic, and the efforts of a few individuals without the backing of the profession as a whole. In order to gain the recognition which he deserves, the work of the engineer must be brought before the public and the influence of the profession as a body must be made effective. Professor F. H. Newell of the University of Illinois, and formerly Chief of the U. S. Reclamation Service, as Chairman of the National Committee on Engineering Co-operation, has done more work than any one else along this line. To further these ideas in Ohio a meeting of delegates from a number of local technical organizations in the State, was held at the University on January 29th 1918, and the Association of Ohio Technical Societies was formed. The purpose of the Association is set forth in the following excerpt from the minutes of the meeting:

"Let us have a central organization—call it what you will—which has no authority to command, which has ears to hear and a voice to be heard, and let the ears be open to every plea or promise of common good, and let that voice go out to all affiliated bodies, carrying this plea or this promise for the common good, and let us come together at least once a year and feel 'that touch of nature which makes the whole world kin' and growing out of that kinship let us consider and do those helpful things which will bless our com-

rades and overflow with helpfulness to our country and our kind."

The engineer is, by training and experience, careful in his statements and conservative in his judgments. These very qualifications tend to keep him from public notice and militate against his advancement, while they are the very ones which make his presence on boards or commissions charged with the execution of public improvements desirable. A resolution was passed at the meeting that "local engineering societies should urge upon the appointive powers, municipal, county and state, the appointment of a competent engineer on all boards and commissions having to do with public works."

That the engineer is beginning to be appreciated by others is indicated in the quotation given below from the pen of a man who is not an engineer.

"How often we trust our lives to the faithfulness of some stoop-shouldered man at a brightly lit drawing board, to the care of a riveter hammering away between earth and sky, to the keenness of an iron worker sweating metal through a steel mill—and how seldom it is that they fail us! The engineers are in the trenches of our civilization; they don't do much of the parading nor march gaily after brass bands, but the rest of us live in what security our habits will allow us, behind the battle line against nature which they maintain. And so a salute to the engineers!"